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## NOTES.

THE four papers that make up Professor Woodberry's "Heart of Man" (The Macmillan Company, 1899) are intended, as the author tells us, to illustrate how poetry, politics, and religion are the flowering of the same human spirit, and have their feeding roots in the common soil, "deep in the general heart of men." The first of them, "Taormina," is a description of the Sicilian village of that name and of its environs, with Etna in the background. Then follows the essay likely to attract most attention, "A New Defense of Poetry," or, as one might rather say, of the ideal in life and in all forms of art, an excellent piece of work, although a little extreme in some of its positions, as, for instance, in the statement that "tragedy and comedy belong alike to low civilizations, to wicked, brutal, or ridiculous types of character and disorderly events, to the confusion, ignorance, and ignominies of mankind." (P. 153.) In the next essay, "Democracy," is found to be the embodiment in society of the ideal life, whose relations to religion occupy the somewhat orphic "Ride," with which the volume closes. The book is a product of ripe thought and matured conviction, and is suggestive of Emerson in its stimulating grace of style.

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According to the old Latin saying, *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*, we ought to admire Dr. James Haughton Woods's "Value of Religious Facts" (New York, Dutton, 1899) for we have found the sinuosities of his psychology rather a strain on the relaxed mind of summer. So far as we comprehend the purport of his little book, it seeks first to show that religion, as a matter of fact, is always more than an experience of ideal laws, and that it is in constant relation to a superhuman form of being in whom lies the meaning and fate of our life. Psychological facts, he says, permit us to treat religion as a unit and to trace contradictory forms to

simple sources. There is no religious life, he concludes, that is not the result of supersensuous power in the form of the stimulation or satisfaction of impulses of the will, and this makes it easier to believe in a progressive revelation of God in history, while religion itself may be treated as independent of other forms of life. All this is supposed to induce more serious persons to submit to the influences of the Christian religion. Its effect on us has been rather to evoke a rebellious mind.

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An occasion memorable in the annals of the Diocese of New York, and indeed of the American Church, since it planted a standard of liberty in scriptural study toward which the friends of freedom of thought could look with confidence and hope, was the 14th of May, 1899, when in the pro-cathedral of the metropolitan city, Bishop Potter ordained to the priesthood the great Presbyterian teacher and scholar, Dr. Charles Augustus Briggs, together with a Methodist clergyman of distinction, Mr. Snedeker. To preach worthily on such an occasion was the difficult task that fell to Dr. George William Douglas, and those who read the sermon now printed by the Macmillans will agree with the distinguished audience that he acquitted himself well. He spoke of authority in the higher reality of its essential basis, in its vindication in the reason, the conscience, and in the spiritual intuitions of men. The failure of the Church to convert the world could, he said, be largely attributed to her failure to embody her message and to practise what she preached. She had not taught in the true sense as one having authority, for there was no authority like personal character. We are not surprised that the dignified eloquence of the distinguished preacher moved the congregation deeply, and we feel grateful at once to him and to the clergy whose united voice impelled this timely publication.

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A NEW series of monographs on American literature has been begun by the Macmillan Co., under the editorship of

Prof. George E. Woodberry, of Columbia University. It is entitled "National Studies in American Letters," and its object "is to present the history and development of our literature during its first century in a form sufficiently *various* and many-sided to comprehend its many phases and their particular relation to historical movements, social conditions, localities, differences of origin, temperament, and environment—to exhibit, in general, its whole breadth and copiousness; and to do this in such a way as to make the entire series a complete view, valuable both for itself now and as a permanent record of the century."

Of the component volumes we may mention "Old Cambridge," by Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, which now lies before us, and such promised contributions as "The American Historical Novel," by Paul Leicester Ford; "The Knickerbockers," by the Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke; "Southern Humorists," by John Kendrick Bangs, editor of *Literature*; "Brook Farm," by Lindsay Swift, of the Boston Public Library; "The Clergy in American Life and Letters," by the Rev. Daniel Dulaney Addison; and "Flower of Essex," by the general editor. It will be seen at once that this new series promises to be both entertaining and instructive, although it is also apparent that some editorial care will be required to keep the volumes from overlapping. We look forward with special interest to the volumes assigned to the Rev. Mr. Addison and to Mr. Bangs. It is a fact too little known that the humor of such *ante bellum* Southern writers as Judge Longstreet was greatly influential in developing the modern American humor of writers like Mark Twain.

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Col. Higginson's book on "Old Cambridge" is readable like all his work, and will be eagerly consulted by all persons interested in the historic town of which he himself has long been *magna pars*. It is divided into five chapters. The first is on "Old Cambridge." The second describes the literary work of the town during the three epochs of the *North American Review*, the *Dial*, and the *Atlantic Month-*

ly. Then the three great authors, Holmes, Longfellow, and Lowell, furnish each a title of a chapter. A good index proves how many interesting people are mentioned in the volume.

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Mr. Thomas Whittaker, of New York, sends us an anonymous volume of short poems entitled "An Epic of the Soul." The author is said to be a man known in more than one department of literature. Such being the case, we see no reason why he should have kept his name from the public, for these eighty poems are quite worthy of attention. They record "the experience of one who has sounded the depths of doubt and despair, and emerged into light on the farther side." The poetical form employed seems to be new, consisting as it does of a five-lined stanza rhyming a, b, a, a, b, followed by three lines rhyming c, c, a. The effect is quite harmonious.

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We have on our table "Contemporary French Novelists," by René Doumic (Crowell), an appropriate reminder of the distinguished critic's recent visit to America; "An Introduction to the Study of Literature," by Edwin Herbert Lewis; "From Comte to Benjamin Kidd," by Robert Mackintosh; "Child Life," by Etta Austin Blaisdell and Mary Frances Blaisdell, a good first reader; "A Collection of Poetry for School Reading," selected by Marcus White; "Ethics and Revelation," by Prof. Henry S. Nash; "Social Phases of Education in the School and Home," by Samuel T. Dutton—all from the Macmillan Company. The same company sends us volumes four and five of the admirable Temple reprint of North's "Plutarch," and "Bible Stories—New Testament," a supplementary volume to Dr. R. G. Moulton's well-known "Modern Reader's Bible."